



**Hundredth Legislature - First Session - 2007
Committee Statement
LB 646**

Hearing Date: March 14, 2007

Committee On: Government, Military and Veterans Affairs

Introducer(s): (Nelson)

Title: Change provisions relating to counting ballots

Roll Call Vote – Final Committee Action:

- Advanced to General File
 - X Advanced to General File with Amendments
 - Indefinitely Postponed
-

Vote Results:

7	Yes	Senators Adams, Aguilar, Avery, Karpisek, Mines, Pahls, Rogert
0	No	
0	Present, not voting	
1	Absent	Senator Friend

Proponents:

Senator John Nelson
Mike Boyle
Shawn Renner
Dave Phipps
Nancy Josoff
Glenda DeBrie

Scott Lautenbaugh
Sandra Stelling

Matt Connealy
Larry Dix

Representing:

Introducer
Self
Media of Nebraska, Inc.
Douglas County Election Commission
Self
Buffalo County
Nebraska Association of County Officials
Self
Clerks/Register of Deeds/Election
Commissioners Association
Nebraska Democratic Party
Nebraska Association of County Officials

Opponents:

Neal Erickson

Representing:

Secretary of State

Neutral:

Bob Twiss

Representing:

Self

Summary of purpose and/or changes:

LB 646 allows counting boards to begin counting early ballots no earlier than twenty-four hours prior to the opening of the polls on election day.

The bill also allows counting boards to open and prepare early voting ballots as directed by the election commissioner or county clerk. Currently, the counting board is allowed to open and prepare such ballots on the Thursday before the election.

Finally, any election commissioner or county clerk using a centralized vote counting device will develop a procedure for picking up and counting ballots during election day.

Explanation of amendments, if any:

The committee amendment contains several provisions of LB 528, which makes changes to the Election Act.

The first change eliminates certain types of counting boards. Before the new voting equipment, counting boards were appointed for a precinct to manually count paper ballots. With the new voting equipment, counties no longer manually count ballots and therefore, these counting boards are no longer necessary.

The second change requires candidates to be affiliated with a political party before the first Friday in December prior to the statewide primary election in order to be eligible as a write-in candidate.

The final change provides that if the ballot for early voting has not been printed in sufficient time, the election commissioner or county clerk will issue a special ballot at least 60 days prior to the election to each qualified voter requesting a special ballot. The current deadline is 57 days prior to the election. This change is made to bring the statutes into compliance with federal law.

Senator Ray Aguilar, Chairperson